DOCUMENTS

RELATING TO THE

RESIGNATION

OF THE

CANADIAN MINISTRY

IN

SEPTEMBER, 1854.

Speech of the Honorable Inspector General Hincks in the Legislative Assembly, on Friday, the 8th September—Address to the Electors of South Oxford—Correspondence with Mr. Wilson, M. P. P. for London, Canada West.

QUEBEC.

1852.

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY,

Friday, Sept. 8th, 1854.

RESIGNATION OF THE MINISTRY.

After the presentation and reading of sundry petitions,

INSPECTOR GENERAL HINCKS rose and said, Mr. Speaker, I am about to move that the Orders of the Day be postponed until Monday next, and in submitting that motion, it is my duty to state to the House, what is probably already known to a great many honorable gentlemen,—that I felt it my duty this day, in conjunction with my honorable colleague, the Commissioner of Crown Lands, (Mr. Morin,) to tender our resignation to His Excellency the Governor General, that His Excellency has been pleased to accept our resignation, and that we now only hold office until our successors shall be appointed. I desire, Sir, to trespass on the time of the House for a few moments while I briefly assign the reasons that have led to our taking this step.

I shall not, Sir, go back—for I deem it unnecessary to do so—to any matters connected with the formation of the administration that preceded the present one, and of which I had the honor to be a member. But I shall content myself with stating that after that administration had been some time in office, after we had carried, by very considerable majorities, measures which have been received, I believe, with very great satisfaction by the country at large—measures that we shall always be proud

to have our names identified with, and to which, as they are recorded on the Statute Book of the Country, I do not think it necessary to refer more particularly at present—during the Session of 1851 we had such evidence of the disorganization of the party in Upper Canada by whose support and confidence we had been enabled to conduct the affairs of the Province, that at a late period of that Session, my honorable and learned friend, the then Attorney General for Upper Canada, (Mr. Baldwin) was under the necessity of tendering his resignation. I was then, as Mr. Baldwin has since felt it necessary to explain, although it was not made public at the time, most anxious to retire with him from the Government. Mr. Baldwin strongly urged upon me the importance for the interests of the great party with which I have the honor of being connected, of not taking that step. He conceived that the measure on which the Government had, so far as Upper Canada was concerned, been defeated by a very large majority, was one with which he, as Attorney-General of the Province, was more particularly identified, and for which he was more especially responsible, and he did not think that I should be justified in tendering my resignation at that time. It is perfectly well known that the honorable and learned gentleman who is the present Chief Justice of Lower Canada (Mr. Lafontaine), and who had been the leader of the administration for his section of the Province, and in reference to whom it is unnecessary for me to say now, for I have often had an opportunity of doing so before, that I have always looked up to him with the highest respect and admiration, had then announced his intention of withdrawing at the close of that Parliament from public life altogether. Under these circumstances, we felt that the best course we could pursue was to endeavor to carry on the public business of the country during the few days that had to elapse before the close of the session, and to resign at the earliest moment that His Excellency could have an opportunity of forming a new administration. When my honorable and learned friend, Mr. Lafon-

taine, tendered his resignation, His Excellency the Governor General did me the honor to send for me in conjunction with my honorable friend the Commissioner of Crown Lands (Mr. Morin), to consult with us in regard to the formation of a new administration. Upon one point my honorable friend and I have always been agreed, and that is, that it is most important to the interests of this country that the administration should, if possible, command the confidence of both sections of the Province (hear, hear.) I do not mean to say that it is always possible, but I think every honorable member will admit that it is, at all events, exceedingly desirable. (Hear, hear.) I felt at that time that I could, in conjunction with my honorable and learned friend, form an administration which would command the general confidence of the country.

It is my particular desire on the present occasion, in making this short statement of facts, to avoid any thing at all like controversy. I will not therefore refer to certain charges made in regard to combinations, more particularly by the honorable member for Lambton (Mr. Brown,) but I shall take an opportunity on some other occasion of vindicating the course I followed at that period. It is sufficient for me now to say that I felt at that time that it was exceedingly desirable, with a view to preserve the integrity of the Reform party in Upper Canada with which I had always been identified, to seek for the support of those who enjoyed the confidence of that section of the party which had for some time been in strong opposition to the administration of which I had been a member, if it could be done without any compromise of principle on my part. I avail myself of this opportunity of referring publicly to the most important circumstance in connection with the formation of that administration and which perhaps led to the difficulties which have existed and which are existing even at this moment. I desire now to state what were my views at the time that administration was formed. While I was most anxious as a member of the Re-

form party to use my utmost exertions to bring to the support of the Government the assistance of gentlemen commanding the confidence of that section of the party which had opposed me, I felt that I should be dishonored as a public man if I did so by the sacrifice of those men who had faithfully adhered to the administration of which I had been a member, and who had at all times consistently supported Mr. Baldwin and myself when in office. Prominent among the gentlemen who stood in that position was my honorable and learned friend, Mr. Justice Richards, then member of Parliament for the County of Leeds. Mr. Richards had always given a cordial and consistent support to our Government. I felt that if, in conjunction with my honorable friend Mr. Morris, the Speaker of the Legislative Council, and the honorable member for Glengary (Mr. McDonald), who was then Solicitor General, I had invited Gentlemen belonging to what might be called the Opposition into our Government, and had entirely excluded Gentlemen who had always adhered to us, on the plea of maintaining the integrity of the party, my character as a public man would have been compromised. Well, Sir, I opened negociations with a view to the formation of an administration. Prior to that I believe a great deal of conversation had taken place with regard to the manner in which that administration was to be formed. The honorable and learned member for Glengary will allow me to say, without meaning any reproach, that I believe he is rather fond of making combinations before being properly authorized to do so (hear, hear). At all events, it had been industriously given out, although perhaps not by him, that my honorable friend, Mr. Cameron, the present Post Master General, was to be a member of the administration as well as my honorable and venerable friend the member for Norfolk, Dr. Rolph, and such was the public expectation. I invited the honorable member for Norfolk to join the administration and assist in carrying it on, informing him at the time of doing so, that it was

my intention to offer the Attorney Generalship for Upper Canada to Mr. Richards. The honorable member, after some correspondence, did the only thing he could honorably have done under the circumstances: he said he could not accept office without the assistance in the administration of Mr. Cameron. The honorable Member for Glengary at that juncture had refused to accept the Office of Commissioner of Crown Lands which was offered him, and I was thus enabled to do what I could not otherwise have done—place a department at the disposal of Mr Cameron. The administration was then formed which has with slight modification continued to the present time. We have carried through a number of measures. I will not refer to them at all in detail, because, as I said in reference to the measures of the preceding administration, they are upon the Statute Book of the country, and I am quite willing that the country shall judge whether they have been measures of progress and generally acceptable to the people. The adminstration was opposed, I believe at the very outset, in the most strenuous manner by the Honorable member for Lambton (Mr. Brown) who had been a distinguished member of the liberal party, and in adverting to the Honorable Gentleman, I must do him the justice to say that there is one thing I like about him, and it is that he has always been straight forward in his opposition, (Hear, hear). There is no misunderstanding *him* at all events. He took his course—he was determined to destroy the Government, (Mr. Brown, hear, hear). I wish not to disparage my opponents. I wish to believe that the course they take is the one which they consider best calculated to promote the interests of the country. I am willing to give the honorable member for Lambton the same credit which I trust he would accord to me. I am willing to believe that he thought he would promote the best interests of the country by obstructing the progress of the Administration. He at all events took that course at the beginning and has persevered in it ever since. Well, Sir, by degrees an opposition sprang up in the ranks of the Liberal Party, and the result was

that at the last Session of Parliament, the dissaffection was so great that the Administration was left in a minority.

Now what I more particularly desire to call the attention of the House to is this—that throughout all these proceedings my honorable and learned friend beside me (Mr. Morin) has received a cordial support from a parliamentary majority from Lower Canada (hear, hear,) not composed of men of any particular origin; for I am sure my honorable friend knows as well as I do, that some of our firmest and most unwavering supporters from Lower Canada have been of English origin, and we feel towards them the same affection and gratitude that we do for all our other supporters. (Hear, hear.) My honorable friend has throughout received a cordial support from his friends, and I may be permitted to say, now when we have gone out of office, and are little likely again to return to power, that no man in this House better deserves such support than my honorable friend (hear, hear). Of him and his colleagues from Lower Canada I can hardly trust myself to speak lest my feelings should overpower me in attempting to express my esteem for them. They have throughout received that cordial and unwavering support without which, I maintain, it is utterly impossible for any Government to carry on the business of this or any other country. When Parliament met some months ago, it was evident that there was a very strong opposition to the administration from Upper Canada. That opposition proceeded from various causes and from different sections. A majority of the House having concurred in a vote which we considered as equivalent to a vote of want of confidence, we believed it to be our duty, in the interest of the party with which we were connected, and to secure the carrying out of the great measures before the country, to advise His Excellency the Governor General to dissolve the existing Parliament with a view to an appeal to the people.

Mr. Speaker, I shall never regret that course. It was taken with a great deal of deliberation. The policy which

to some extent caused the necessity of that dissolution—the policy of postponing the settlement of the great questions then pending with regard to the Clergy Reserves and the Seigniorial Tenure until a new parliament should be elected, is one which I am perfectly certain the public opinion of this country will sustain when all the present contentions are over, and I believe that nothing will have a greater tendency to secure a satisfactory adjustment of those questions than the course of the administration at that time. The dissolution of Parliament took place. The result was precisely what we had anticipated. A very large majority of the members elected were in favor of those measures and especially of the one in relation to the Clergy Reserves which was brought most prominently before the country. His Excellency has been advised to state in the speech from the throne that the opinion of the country has been expressed upon that question in no equivocal terms. I am sure honorable members on all sides of the house will admit that there can be no doubt about that. Well, Sir, we met Parliament; up to that time we had every reason to believe that the government would be sustained. The first question which arose, as a matter of course, was the election of a Speaker. I may be permitted to say, now that it is all over, that I had a very strong opinion upon that subject, and I shall state that opinion without any reservation. That opinion was that if we were beaten on the Speakership, the Government could not last a week. I say this because certain Members of this House professing to be friends of the Administration but who pride themselves on not being "party men," thought the question of the Speakership one of no importance whatever to the country, and determined to vote for whoever they pleased. Well, the election for Speaker took place, and the Government was beaten by a majority of three. From the time that division took place we have had indications every day—aye every hour, that gentlemen whom we had reason to expect were friends of the Administration did not intend to support it.

(Hear, hear.) In reference to the Speakership, I must mention that the Government Candidate for that office was supported by a very fair majority from Lower Canada. (Hear, hear.) My honorable friend from Verchères (Mr. Cartier), the defeated candidate for Speaker, has, at all events, the satisfaction of knowing that the Representatives of Lower Canada, where he is best known, gave him a good majority of votes (Ministerial Cheers). But the Administration was defeated on the Speakership by a majority of 12 from Upper Canada. Honorable members who understand the position of public men will believe that this was a cause of very great embarrassment to me in the position that I occupied. In endeavoring to sustain my honorable colleague (Mr. Morin), I expected to be able to bring to his support the confidence of a majority of the Representatives of that portion of the Province to which I more particularly belong, so as to enable us conjointly to carry on the Government. The vote on the Speakership plainly indicated that I should not be able to do that. Immediately after that vote I fully made up my mind that it was utterly impossible for me to continue to conduct the government of the country with any sort of satisfaction, even if we should happen to have a majority on the Address in answer to the Speech from the Throne. I was perfectly certain that the majority, if any, could not be more than two or three, and that there would be a majority against us from Upper Canada. I felt that I should not be justified in remaining in an Administration with my Colleagues from Lower Canada when I could not command the confidence of the section of the Province to which I belong. I determined however to let the debate on the address come on in the House and be carried to a vote and then take my own course afterwards. But yesterday evening a question of privilege affecting the seat of an Hon. Member of this House came up unexpectedly by me. Some gentlemen may not regard it as a question of very material importance, but I and my honorable Colleagues take a different view of the subject. For myself I can only say that

I did not know until I came into the House yesterday evening that such a question was likely to arise. I found that the honorable Attorney General for Lower Canada wished to have twenty-four hours to consider the course that should be taken in regard to it. I certainly do not think the demand was an unreasonable one (Hear, hear). I think it desirable that before action is taken upon such questions some time should be allowed for consideration. However the Government was unable to get a postponement of the question and we were exposed to taunts of which I do not complain, for they were well deserved and well applied. We were told by the honorable and learned member for Toronto (Mr. Cameron), that we were placed in a position where important proceedings were going on and we were not able to direct them. This was true and we were certainly placed in a very embarrassing position. Feeling this strongly, I considered it my duty not to lose any further time in pursuing the course which I had determined on. Accordingly I communicated in the course of the debate last night, with my honorable friend (Mr. Morin) and told him that it was my determination to tender my resignation. My Honorable Colleague, feeling, I am sure, that the course I proposed to take was a proper one, under the circumstances, joined with me in it. This morning we tendered our resignations to His Excellency and those Resignations as I have already informed the House have been accepted.

Mr. Speaker, there is one other point which I must crave the indulgence of the House to allude to. In the course of discussions here and elsewhere certain charges personal to myself have been made. I do trust Honorable Gentlemen opposite will do me the justice to believe that I have no desire to avoid a full investigation into those charges. (Hear hear) I stated during the late session that it was my anxious desire that such an investigation should take place, (Mr. Mackenzie hear, hear.) I am anxious now that it shall take place. I am anxious

to submit to the judgment of the House any charges that can possibly be brought against me (MR. MACKENZIE Hear, hear). With regard to the attacks which have been made upon me and which I do not desire now to characterize, all that I have to say is, that I can afford to forgive the authors of them. (Loud cries of hear, hear.) When I hear the honorable gentleman opposite (Mr. Mackenzie) cry "hear, hear" I cannot help being reminded of one fact at all events that will be a consolation to me whatever may happen hereafter. That honorable gentleman who cries "hear, hear" threatened over and over again during the last session, as honorable gentlemen must well recollect, that he would turn me out of the County of Oxford. (Loud cries of hear, hear.) He told the House again and again that it was through his influence that I sat as the member for the County of Oxford. (Renewed cries of hear, hear.)

MR. MACKENZIE, no, no.

The INSPECTOR GENERAL I say yes, yes. The honorable member came up to the County of Oxford with which I had been connected for many years, and the confidence of the people of which I had received many proofs of possessing. He came to my meetings. He advanced all his charges. He spoke for hours on various occasions. He circulated all kinds of hand-bills, *Message* extras, *Globe* extras, *Examiner* extras, *North American* extras and how many votes did his candidate get? (Loud cries of hear, hear.) Why just 23! (Renewed cries of "hear, hear" from both sides of the House), and I was elected by a majority of above 350, a larger majority than I had ever received before. (Loud cheers) And not only that, but I had the gratification of being also returned for the County of Renfrew, a County into which I had never been, where I had never solicited a vote, and into which I did not enter during the election, (renewed cheers.) I shall conclude—only occupying the time of the House to read an extract from a speech of the late lamented Sir Robert Peel, which I feel is not inapplicable to my situation.

" They (the ministry) felt that being in possession of the entire " confidence of the King, and having received from His Majesty " the most cordial and unremitting support—looking to the pre- " sent position of affairs and the present state of political par " ties—looking to the strength not only the numerical but the " moral strength of that great party, by which they had had the " honor of being supported, they felt it was their duty, under " existing circumstances, to continue the attempt of adminis- " tering public affairs, as responsible advisers of the Crown to " the latest moment that was consistent with the interests of the " public service, and with the honor and character of public men. " (Cheers.) When he did not hesitate to avow the reluctance " with which they had tendered their resignations, he believed " he should have credit (much cheering, both sides the House) " that that reluctance arose from public considerations alone " (renewed cheering), and was wholly unconnected with every- " thing of a personal nature. (Hear, hear, and much cheering, " particularly from the opposition.) He had a strong impression, " that when a public man at a crisis of great importance under- " took the public task of administering the affairs of the country " he incurred an obligation to persevere in the administration " of those affairs, as long as it was possible to do so consistently " with his honor. (Hear, hear.) No indifference to public " life, no disgust with the labors which it imposed, no per- " sonal mortifications, no deference to private feeling could " sanction a public man in withdrawing on light grounds from " the post in which the confidence of his Sovereign had placed " him (Much cheering.) But at the same time there was " an evil in exhibiting to the country, a want on the part of " the government, of that support in the House of Commons " which could enable it satisfactorily to conduct the public " affairs and which could enable it to exercise a control " over the proceedings of the House, a legitimate and " necessary control conferred upon it by the possession " of confidence (Hear, hear.) There was an evil in

"such an exhibition of weakness to which limits must be "placed, and he must say in reviewing all that had oc- "curred since the commencement of the session—looking to "the little progress the government had been able to make in "the business of the country—looking at what had occurred "on each of the last four nights, to the fact that ministers had "on each of the four nights to be left in a minority, consider- "ing that that minority was smaller in relation to the majority "than the minorities they had been in at the commencement of "the session—adverting also to the fact that they had received "the support of those who, not having general and unlimited "confidence in the government, yet had given to the govern- "ment a cordial and honorable support (cheers) on every oc- "casion in which it was consistent with their public prin- "ciples to give it—adverting to all these considerations he "must say that, in his opinion, the time was come when it was "incumbent on ministers of the Crown to withdraw from the "responsibilities which office under such circumstances im- "posed on them."

I desire to add nothing, continued Mr. Hincks, to these remarks of Sir Robert Peel.

Nor shall I trespass much longer on the time of the house. Having tendered my resignation I am now like any other member upon this floor, and know nothing at all of what is going forward. But I desire to say that at this crisis in the affairs of the country—and I look upon it as an important crisis—I do trust public men will be influenced, not by selfish considerations, but by a patriotic desire to carry out those great measures which the interests of the country demand (hear hear). For my own part, for the present at all events, I am desirous of taking my seat by my honorable friend the member for the County of Lincoln (Mr. Merritt), who has been described rather wittily by a newspaper in the City of Toronto as a "governmental impossibility" (Laughter.) In thus retiring from Official life, it would of course be absurd

for me to say that I have no enemies ; for I am under the mipression that I have a great many. But it is most gratifying to me to know that at all events, I have a great many friends (hear, hear,) and they are not altogether confined to my own county, where the honorable member for Lambton stated that I owed my election altogether to my success in making friends. I have the satisfaction of feeling that in this House a very large number of the members have honored me with their personal friendship (Hear, hear.) I am referring at this moment more particularly to those with whom I have acted in public life. I feel more especially grateful for the support they have given me, but I do trust that there are a great many also in the ranks of the opposition with whom I am on terms of friendship and with whom I shall at all events be able to continue on those terms when I no longer occupy a seat upon these benches. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) I now move that the orders of the day be postponed until Monday next.

The motion was agreed to, and then on motion by Mr. Hincks, the House adjourned until Monday.

(*Hon. F. Hincks to the Electors of South Oxford.*)

Quebec, 13th Sept., 1854.

TO THE LIBERAL ELECTORS OF THE SOUTH RIDING OF THE COUNTY OF OXFORD.

Gentlemen,

At this important crisis in the affairs of the Province, I feel it due to you who have so long honoured me with your confidence, as well as to myself, to place you in full possession of all the facts connected with my late resignation of office, and with the reconstruction of the cabinet under Sir

Allan MacNab in conjunction with my late colleague Mr. Morin. In order to do this satisfactorily, I must call your attention to the events of the last few years. On the formation of the liberal administration, in 1848, under Messrs. Lafontaine and Baldwin, I accepted the office of Inspector General, and gave my humble assistance to those gentlemen in carrying on the public affairs. In 1850, the opposition to the Government from the extreme section of the liberal party in Upper Canada, began to assume a formidable shape. During the session of 1851, a motion introduced by Mr. Mackenzie, though defeated by a majority of votes in the House, was nevertheless sustained by so large a number of the members for Upper Canada, that my much esteemed leader and friend, the Hon. Mr. Baldwin, felt it his duty to resign office. A few weeks subsequently the administration was broken up by the retirement of Mr. Lafontaine from public life. On this event taking place His Excellency the Governor General did me the honour to take my advice on the subject of the reconstruction of the administration. Being most anxious at that time, as I have ever been, to preserve the unity of the liberal party, I deemed it to be my duty to endeavour to conciliate the support of those who seemed to have no other ground of opposition to government than their own unworthy suspicions. These parties affected, notwithstanding the strongest assurances to the contrary, to doubt my sincerity on the Clergy Reserves question. To remove these doubts it seemed to me to be absolutely necessary that the new Government should include the names of gentlemen possessing the confidence of the dissatisfied section of the party. After some negociation, and after surmounting considerable difficulties, the administration was formed on such a basis as enabled me to assure my Hon. friend Mr. Morin that it would be sustained by public opinion in Upper Canada. To my deep regret, however, the new administration, like the one preceding it, was assailed by a section of the liberal party. On all suitable occasions I have implored the reformers of Upper Canada to

maintain the unity of their party, and there was no personal sacrifice that I would not have cheerfully made in order to accomplish that object. Embarrassed on all sides, I, nevertheless, steadily persevered in pressing forward the measures desired by the country. On the meeting of Parliament in June last, an amendment to the address in answer to the speech from the throne having been carried by Upper Canada Reform votes, I was placed in a most embarrassing situation. I found myself unable to obtain for my friend Mr. Morin that support from Upper Canada, without which it was impossible that public affairs could be satisfactorily conducted. There was no choice for the Government but to resign or recommend a dissolution of Parliament. After great hesitation I concurred in recommending the latter course, and a general election followed. In common with the whole Canadian public, I noticed with astonishment the course pursued by Mr. Brown the leading opponent of the Government on the liberal side. That gentleman distinctly avowed his conviction that the Conservative party had abandoned opposition to the Secularization of the Clergy Reserves. He, in almost every instance, supported candidates who had previously been identified with the Conservative party in opposition to Reformers, and especially in the City of Hamilton he supported Sir Allan MacNab against Mr. Buchanan. He assured the country that the Conservatives would settle the Clergy Reserves question by devoting the fund to secular purposes, an assertion little credited at the time, but which is about to be realized. On the meeting of the present Parliament the first question to be determined was the choice of Speaker. I need hardly inform so intelligent a body as yourselves, that this question must necessarily be a party one. The Liberals having a large majority in the House, had the power of selecting their candidate, but owing to want of unity there was great fear of defeat. My own inclination would have led me to refuse all cooperation with the followers of Mr. Brown, towards whom

I was in a position of political antagonism, but I yielded to the wishes of my friends from Upper Canada that a meeting of the whole Liberal party should be called and the choice determined by ballot. Such a meeting was called, but it was almost immediately announced by Mr. Fergusson that he would not yield to the majority. On a ballot being taken the choice fell on Mr. Cartier, Member for Verchères, who had a large majority of votes. The Chairman, Mr. Merritt, was pressed to propose Mr. Cartier, but he declined, and, as it afterwards appeared, because he had determined to support the candidate brought forward by the Opposition. You are all aware that the Government Candidate was beaten by a majority of three. On the following day, Wednesday, 6th September, rumours were in active circulation that the Ministry would be beaten; and so confident were its opponents that lists of a new Ministry to be formed by Mr. J. S. McDonald, and including the names of Mr. Hartman and Mr. Freeman were in the mouths of the public. On Wednesday, the 6th, the Speech of the Governor General on the opening of Parliament was delivered, indicating as plainly as such documents ever do, that a measure for Secularizing the Clergy Reserves would be submitted. Nevertheless the dissatisfied party expressed loud discontent, and great efforts were made to withdraw support from the Administration. On Thursday, the 7th, I received a letter from an influential Member, whose support I had relied on, intimating his intention of opposing the Address. This defection seemed to render success improbable, but I soon received news which made my continuance in office impossible. On the day above referred to, (Thursday) Mr. Rolph, felt it his duty to intimate to two Members of the Cabinet his intention of resigning, on the ground as I understood of Mr. Sicotte's election to the Speaker's chair. One of the gentlemen referred to (Mr. Morris) at the time that he informed me that he had had an important conversation with Mr. Rolph, declined, on the ground of its being confidential, to communicate to me what it was.

The other (Mr. Chauveau) informed me that Mr. Rolph had come to him and asked him to whom he was to tender his resignation. You may naturally suppose that at such a crisis, the least symptom of weakness in the administration itself would be fatal to its existence. Mr. Rolph's separate resignation at such a crisis would have materially strenghtened the Opposition, and I was under serious apprehension that personal difficulties might be added to those with which the administration was surrounded. I confess, therefore that I felt relieved a finding in the course of the evening, that my resignation could be fully justified on grounds, which would enable me to avoid anything like a difference with one of my colleagues. A question of privilege having been brought under the consideration of the House by a leading member of the Opposition, the Attorney General for Lower Canada asked a delay of 24 hours to consider the case—this demand was refused, and the division lists will shew that the Upper Canada liberal members, who were said to have deserted the Ministerial ranks, voted with the Opposition. Further, it will appear by the Journals, that in the course of the evening Mr. Rolph himself voted with the Opposition. The members of the Government whom I communicated with, entirely concurred with me as to the necessity of resignation. After what had passed during the day, it was obviously unnecessary for me to communicate with Mr. Rolph, and I was most anxious to be spared the necessity of alluding to his intended resignation—I scrupulously avoided all reference to it in my explanatory remarks in the House and should have abstained from public notice of it, had not the friends of Mr. Rolph made it an accusation against me, that I resigned without consultation with him. It is satisfactory to me to know that, with very few exceptions, the friends of the late administration, both in Upper and Lower Canada, constituting by far the largest party in the House, although unable to cope with the united strength of the adherents of Sir Allan MacNab and of Messrs. Dorion, Brown and McDonald, have approved of my resignation as well as of

all my subsequent proceedings. Strange to say the parties who declaim most loudly against the present combination, are those who have been for months trying to persuade the Reformers of Upper Canada, that the Conservatives were the very men who could be most safely relied on to carry the secularization of the Reserves. It must now be apparent that there are men who do not wish the Clergy Reserves question settled, or at all events who insist on its being settled by themselves, and by no others. For my own part, I will join in no mere factious movement. Driven from official life, I shall nevertheless continue to support as an independent member of Parliament the principles and policy which I have long advocated, and I shall experience I assure you, no personal mortification at the loss of office if my late colleagues and their new allies should be able to secure a larger share of Parliamentary support than the late administration was able to do. My proceedings since the resignation have been made the subject of severe criticism, and what is worse of infamous slander. The factious combination which drove me from power has been confounded at Sir Allan MacNab's *coup d'état*, and having been incessantly engaged for many months in all kinds of intrigues to obtain power for themselves, they imagine that I am capable of the same dishonourable conduct. My resignation was just what my enemies desired, and they certainly have no right to complain of it. I have already given a public and emphatic contradiction to the allegation that I recommended Sir Allan MacNab to be sent for, that I had any understanding whatever with that honorable gentleman regarding a coalition, or that I had the least idea that he would consent to the secularization of the Clergy Reserves. Every step that I took was open, candid, and straightforward, although I was surrounded by intrigue and treachery in the ranks of the party from Upper Canada with which I was obliged to act. I need however say no more on this head, but refer you to the subjoined correspondence with John Wilson, Esq., which will explain all my proceedings subsequent to my

resignation. You will find by it that a coalition was agreed on between Sir Allan MacNab and Mr. Morin, on an understanding that the Upper Canadian ex-Ministerial party were to have the option of taking part in it, and on the basis of carrying out the great measures now pending before the country. The result was then communicated to me. I consulted my friends, and felt it my duty to accede to it, but I could not, even if factiously inclined, have controlled it. The Country is now called on for its verdict, and I anticipate it without fear.

I am, &c.,

F. HINCKS.

(*Hon. F. Hincks to John Wilson, Esquire, M. P. P.*)

Quebec, 14th Sept., 1854.

My Dear Sir,

I find myself placed in a very painful position owing to rumours industriously circulated and affecting my personal honour with which your name is mixed up. It is alleged that after having on Friday last called a meeting of the supporters of the Ex-Ministers, and proposed you as leader of the party with which I had acted, I subsequently consented to support a coalition with Sir Allan MacNab's party under the arrangements for which you were personally sacrificed, and that the whole negotiation was carried on, and concluded without your knowledge. Such in substance are the allega-

tions of the present opposition. The facts are as follows : I did propose you as leader of the Ex-Ministerial party, at a meeting of that party numerously attended. It is worthy of remark that Mr. Rolph did not attend that meeting though notified, and that Mr. Foley who acts in concert with him declared that he could not act under you as leader. Mr. Merritt also opposed your nomination. Both these gentlemen have since gone over to the McDonald-Brown party. My object in proposing you as leader was that in my opinion you were the only man likely to be able to unite the liberal conservatives who were pledged to secularization, with the Reformers, and thus effect an arrangement under which the affairs of the country could be carried on. I need not assure you, that at the time, I had no idea whatever that Sir Allan MacNab, who had been sent for by the Governor General as we all knew, would be willing to form a Government on the basis of carrying the secularization of the Clergy Reserves. When I found that Mr. Morin had entered into negotiations with Sir Allan MacNab for the formation of a Government on the basis of carrying out the measures of the late Government and that both parties were most anxious that the ex-Ministerial party in Upper Canada should be parties to the coalition, I was as much surprised as you, or any other individual in the country could be. I shall, however, at all times maintain that the course taken by Sir Allan MacNab was excusable under the circumstances. A considerable number, probably a majority of the party with which he acted, had come into Parliament pledged to Secularization, and, moreover, the public opinion of the country had just been unequivocally expressed on that as well as the other questions at issue. It was no doubt a great sacrifice of feeling for Sir Allan MacNab to make, but in the state of parties in the House, I do maintain most unhesitatingly that no Government could be formed except by means of coalition of some kind, and in point of fact, there is no very material difference between the present coalition, and any which could have been formed under

your leadership. It is notorious that the party in the House led by Mr. Dorion, of Montreal, and by Mr. J. Sandfield McDonald and Mr. Brown, does not number more than about 40 in a House of 130, and even had I and all my friends coalesced with that party on the basis of surrendering to them all the influence of Government, we should still have been in a minority. I have conclusive proof that the adherents of Sir Allan MacNab and Mr. Morin formed a majority of the House, without a single vote from the ex-Ministerial party in Upper Canada. It was, however, evident that to secure a really strong and efficient Government, a more extended coalition was necessary, and as that could not take place between Mr. Morin and his friends and Mr. Dorion and Mr. McDonald, there was no other possible mode in my judgment by which such an Administration could be formed as would ensure confidence both at home and abroad in the stability of the Government. I have troubled you with these remarks that you may understand fully my views as to the position of parties when resignation was forced on me by a section of the Reformers of Upper Canada. My principal object however is to set myself right before the public as to yourself. When Sir Allan MacNab requested an interview with me on Saturday last, and explained to me his views as to the formation of a Coalition Government on the basis already referred to, and to which I could not object, I told him frankly that unless two gentlemen having the full confidence of myself and my friends were included in the Administration, as a guarantee to our party throughout the country that the great measures now pending should be carried out, and that the Coalition was a bonâ fide one based on the adoption of common principles, I did not believe that the new Government would command the confidence of the country. This opinion was given to Sir Allan MacNab late on Saturday, and he made an appointment to see me again the next morning, as he had of course to consult his friends. So far our communication

had been strictly confidential, and I had no authority to consult my friends. The next morning Sir Allan MacNab informed me that he was prepared to form a Government on the basis proposed. And he then authorized me to see my friends, and made another appointment for the evening, when I was to communicate the result. Almost immediately after leaving Sir Allan MacNab, I met quite accidentally my friend Mr. James Smith, M. P. P., for Victoria, with his brother the member for West Northumberland, and after a few minutes conversation I asked Mr. J. Smith to accompany me to your lodgings, feeling that in your position I ought to lose no time in consulting you. I was with you within half an hour after my interview with Sir Allan MacNab. I entered fully and frankly into the subject in the presence of Mr. Smith, and I find that we both understood you in the same way. You admitted all the difficulties of our position as a party, you condemned the course of those who had forced the resignation on the Government, you said that you could not blame Mr. Morin for forming the coalition with Sir Allan MacNab on the proposed basis, but you further declared that there were reasons which would prevent you from becoming a party to such an arrangement and you would go into opposition, but you added that if any of your friends for the sake of the measures felt inclined to join in supporting the coalition Government, you had no objection to their doing so. Such in substance was your communication and you expressed yourself in similar terms to me yesterday in the presence of our mutual friend Mr. Niles. I subsequently saw other friends, and the result was that the great majority of the Upper Canada members of the liberal party who had adhered to the ex-Ministers, were of opinion that we would not be justified in opposing a Government formed on the basis proposed. It is to be observed that Mr. Foley and Mr. Merritt had separated from our party on your being appointed leader, so that our strength was diminished though it is still about the one half of the entire liberal party from Upper Canada. It is

but justice to Mr. Spence, to state that he became convinced that the only reliable mode of obtaining the immediate Secularization of the Clergy Reserves was by supporting the new Government, before he or I had the least idea that office would be offered to him. He has acted at all events conscientiously, and on the highest public considerations, and if it should turn out hereafter that he has committed an error, all I can say is that it is shared by many as sincere and disinterested reformers as any that can be found in the ranks of the opposition. While I am sorry to find that after consideration you have determined to separate yourself from me and from those with whom I act, I confess that my principal anxiety is to convince the Public, now grossly deceived by calumnies of the basest kind industriously circulated that I have in all these difficult negotiations acted towards you in perfect good faith, and with frankness and sincerity. The opposition leader has declared in the House that I have lost the confidence of the Country. I admit the truth of the statement so far as the votes of Upper Canada are concerned, and so far as they were brought to bear on the composition of the late Administration ; but, I emphatically deny that the member for Glengarry has so large an amount of the confidence either of the Upper Canada section of the House or of the Country as I have. It must however be plain, that having so lost confidence, my duty was to resign ; and yet, those who compelled me to do so, and who have destroyed the unity of our party, hold me responsible for the consequences of their own factious conduct. Having resigned, I maintain that I should have been degraded as a public man, had I gone into opposition to my colleagues from Lower Canada with whom I had acted for years, to whom I was bound by every tie of political confidence and personal friendship, and from whom I was compelled to separate because I could not give them the support necessary to carry out our measures—I should have had to oppose them on factious grounds alone, and because having abandoned them I would not allow them to

seek support where it alone could be had, to carry out a policy of which I entirely approve—my opinion of the new Administration is this: I rely with implicit confidence on the personal honor of Sir Allan MacNab, Mr. McDonald, and Mr. Cayley to carry out the policy to which they have pledged themselves, and I think they ought to be held justified by their friends for having made a great sacrifice of feeling in order to ensure for the country what is much wanted at such a crisis as this, a stable and efficient Government. This is no time to make difficulties. The great measures must be carried—the whisper of faction must be silenced. As to my other colleagues, I feel that I at all events can promise my support to Government, while my valued friends from Lower Canada, together with Messrs. Ross and Spence are members of it. The latter gentlemen more especially who have had to sacrifice their feelings also in joining a Coalition Government, deserve a generous and cordial support. I have deemed it a duty to myself to trouble you with these remarks, and I am sure you will do me the justice to acknowledge the straightforwardness of my conduct to you as well as the difficulties of my position, even if you should be unable to agree with me as to my course of action.

Believe me, yours truly,

F. HINCKS.

(*Mr. Wilson, M. P. P. to the Hon. F. Hincks.*)

Quebec, 14th September, 1854.

My dear Sir,

I have just received your's of to day, telling me that numerous "rumours affecting your personal honor, with which my name is mixed up, have been industriously circulated,

in which you say it is alleged, that after having on Friday last called a meeting of the supporters of the Ex-Ministry, and proposed me as a leader of the party with which you acted, that you subsequently consented to support a coalition with Sir Allan MacNab's party under the arrangements for which I was personally sacrificed, and that the whole negociation was carried on without my knowledge."

As regards that part of the rumour which attributes to you the sacrificing of myself, you need give yourself no uneasiness, for I have not felt it. The leadership in question was thrown upon me unexpectedly, and I was happy in being relieved from it. What I felt and said was this, that without any fault of mine and with every desire to sustain the policy of the late Ministry I had been driven into Opposition.

And as regards the other part of the rumour, I beg to say, that from all that has occurred, I am satisfied, that you were taken by surprise at the ready acquiescence with which Sir Allan met your views, and that the arrangements were made without any preconcert or previous understanding whatever.

The facts set forth in your letter are in accordance with my own recollection of them during our interview, and I cannot but acknowledge the straightforward frankness and sincerity of your conduct throughout.

I remain,

Very truly your's,

JOHN WILSON.